

created the size of the regular support staff to about 1,150 positions across the country. Wherever possible, reservists have been integrated with the regular force both on training and operations. For example, 470 reservists were flown to Germany last summer to participate in NATO exercises with 4 CMBG. We now have about 120 men and women serving with our contingent in the Middle East. As well, I have authorized the limited use of reserve personnel for service with our troops in Cyprus. There were also approximately 300 naval-reserve officers and men at sea on both coasts in operational ships during 1975. It is my intention to dress, equip, train, employ and pay the reserve force similarly to the regular force.

We are also working on a submission to the Minister that, if approved, would guarantee job protection and leave of absence for reservists participating on call-out training.

I am a firm believer in the total force concept. More than ever before, we need a strong and credible reserve force, ready to step in to fill the gaps whenever required. I think that, through our current level of effort, that goal will be achieved.

Before I conclude, there is one important announcement I wish to make concerning our air reserves.... I intend to recommend approval of the formation of an Air Reserve Group headquarters, which should be co-located with Air Command headquarters in Winnipeg.

This new headquarters would be the focal-point for all matters common to the air reserves, excluding operational control, which will continue to remain with the appropriate command groups.

This small air-reserve headquarters would be staffed by reserve and regular force personnel....

Since the formation of Air Command headquarters last year, we have found that an essential link is missing between the regular and the reserve air forces. Despite this lack, the total force capability of the air reserves today has been significantly increased as promised by the Minister a year ago. This new headquarters would provide the link to integrate the command, control and administration of our air reserves into Air Command.

I have attempted to be frank and informative. Before I accept questions, I should like to leave this thought with you. For the first time in a long time, we are beginning to achieve stability. I believe that both the Government and the people of Canada understand and support our requirements. The Canadian Armed Forces entered
